

17 27. The semisubmersible vessel according to claim 12, in which the inner perimeter of the ring pontoon forms an octagon.

18 28. The semisubmersible vessel according to claim 12, in which the superstructure deck is further supported by at least four radial braces extending from the ring pontoon to locations on the superstructure deck which are inboard of the ring pontoon.

19 29. The semisubmersible vessel according to claim 12, wherein the vertical centerline of each of the at least four columns is located inward of the axial centerlines of the forward and aft sections of the ring pontoon.

20 30. The semisubmersible vessel according to claim 19, further comprising a plurality of compartments each formed between adjacent sections of the ring pontoon wherein a side of each of the at least four columns is formed as an extension of a side of the adjacent compartment.

B1 21 31. The semisubmersible vessel according to claim 12, wherein the starboard and aft sections of the ring pontoon have reduced sectional height compared with the forward and aft sections of the ring pontoon.

22 32. The semisubmersible vessel according to claim 12, wherein the ring pontoon is non-square.

23 33. The semisubmersible vessel according to claim 22, wherein the outer perimeter of the ring pontoon forms an octagon.

Remarks

The Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during an interview on June 24, 1999. This Amendment is in response to agreement reached during that interview.

In the Examiner's action dated May 19, 1999, the Examiner found claims 3-6, 15 and 17-19 to be allowable. Claim 16 was objected to but would be allowed if amended to include the antecedent "at least" before "four columns". The applicants have requested amendment to claim 16 to respond to the Examiner's objection.

The applicants have added new claims 20 and 21 which recite the subject matter of canceled claims 1 and 2, but which depend from claim 3. Since new claims 20 and 21 depend from a claim which the Examiner has allowed, claims 20 and 21 should be allowable also.

The applicants have also added new claims 22-33. Independent claim 22 recites substantially the same subject matter as previously allowed claim 3, but with the geometry of the structure of the semisubmersible vessel "rotated" 90 degrees. This is recited as "the vertical centerline of each of the at least four columns is located inward of both the axial centerline of the *port* section of the ring pontoon and the axial centerline of the *starboard* section of the ring pontoon" in claim 22, as contrasted to the *forward* and *aft* sections as recited in claim 3. Claims 23-33 depend from claim 22 and should also be allowable.

The Applicants believe that this paper is fully responsive to each and every ground of rejection or objection stated by the Examiner in the action dated May 19, 1999 and that this application is now in condition for allowance.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees not provided for with this paper, or credit any excess payments to Deposit Account 500-591 (Reference No. 09389/002001).

Respectfully submitted,

Date: July 12, 1999

Richard A. Fagin REG NO. 39,182 for
Jonathan P. Osha
Reg. No. 33,986

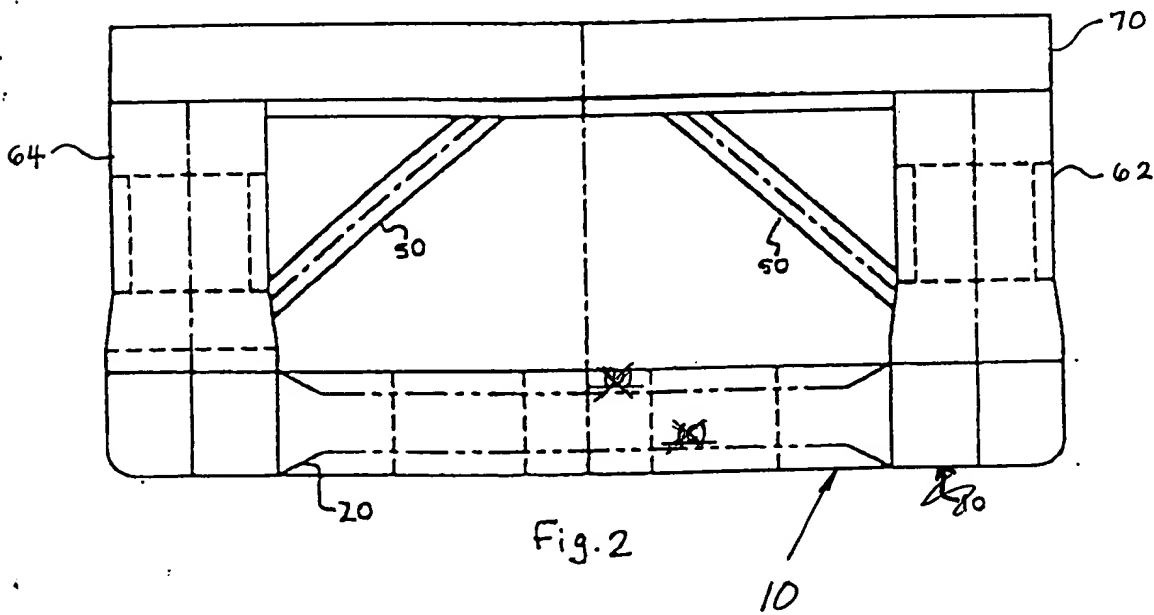
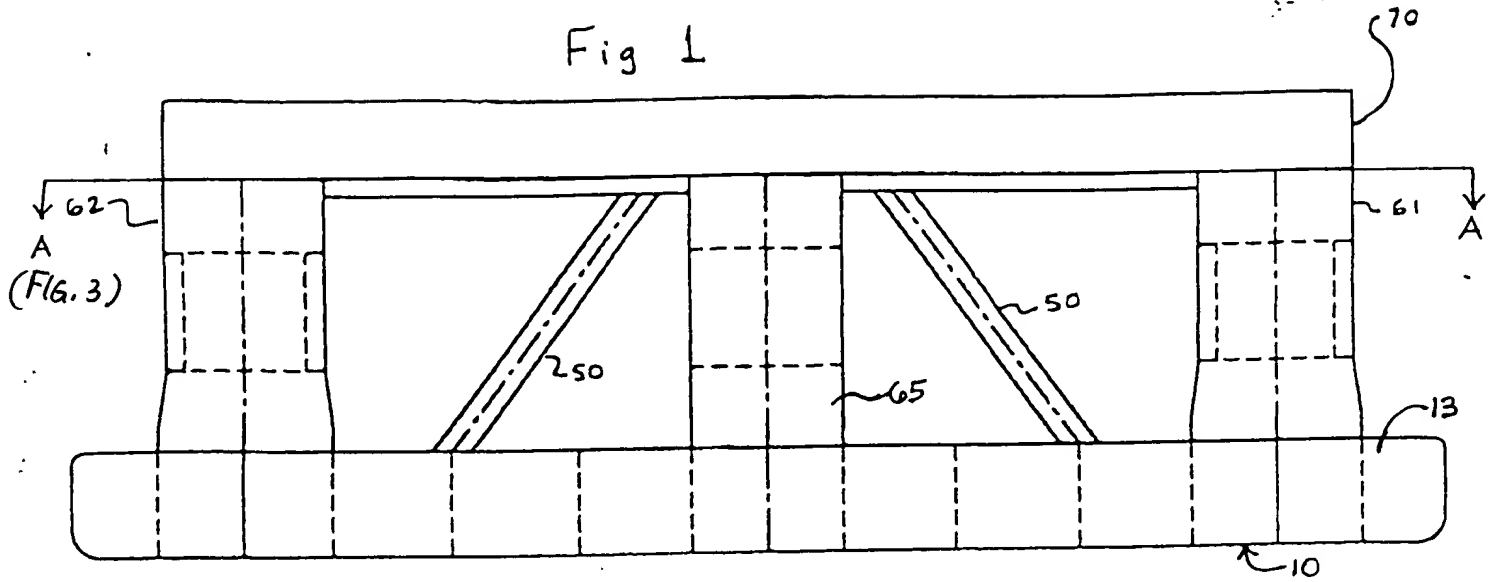
ROSENTHAL & OSHA L.L.P.
700 Louisiana Street, Suite 4550
Houston, TX 77002

Telephone: 713/228-8600
Facsimile: 713/228-8778

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Fig 1



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Fig. 5

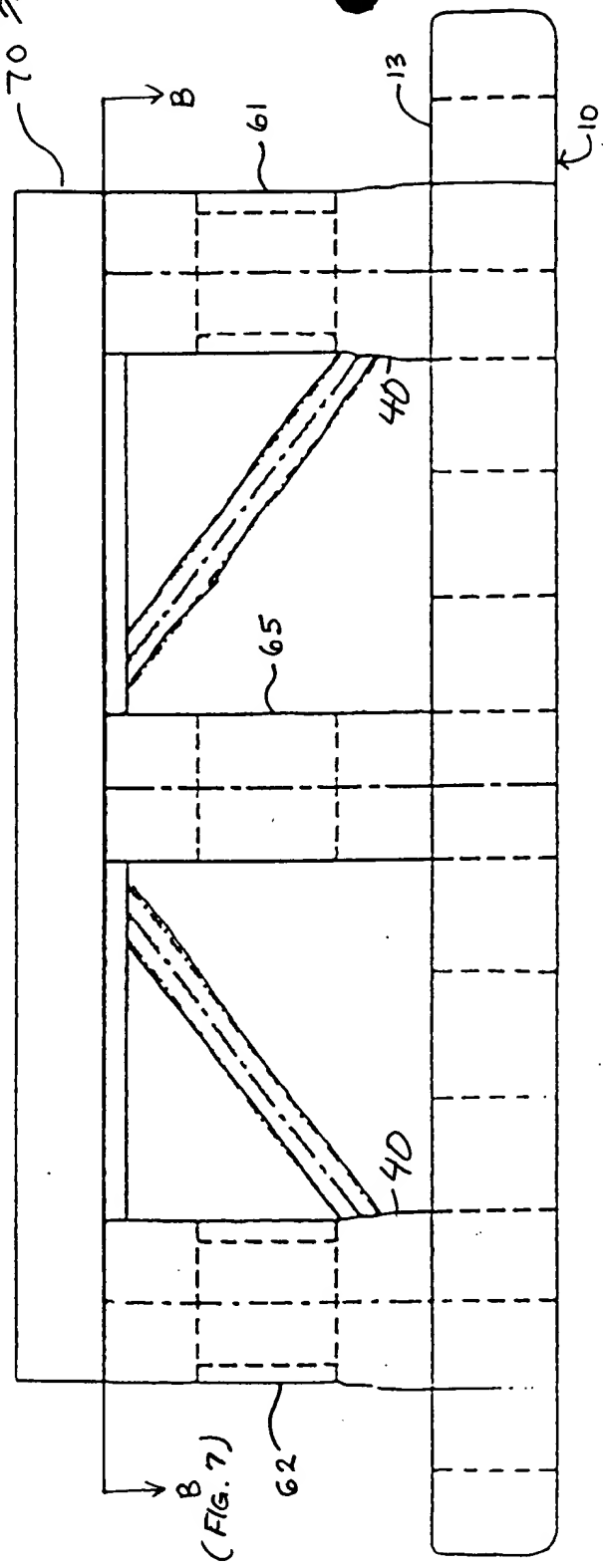
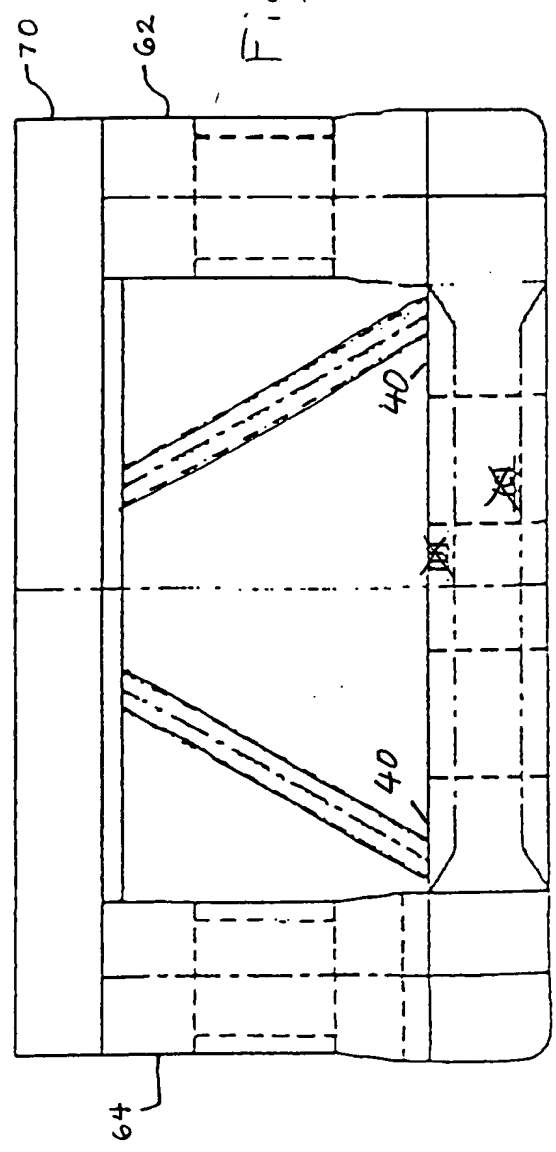


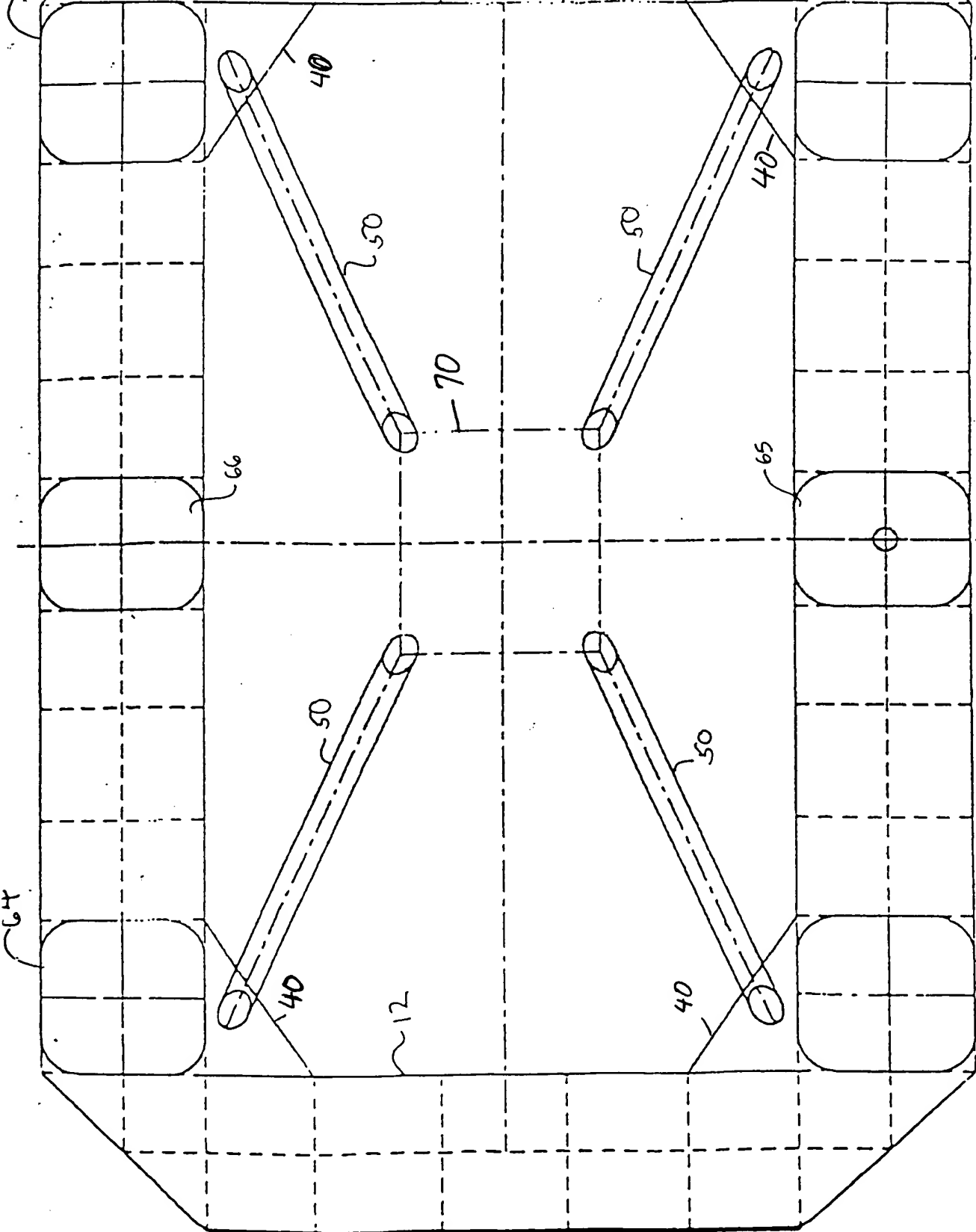
Fig. 6



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Fig. 7

(SECTION B-B ~~FIG. 5~~ FIG. 5)

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Fig. 8.

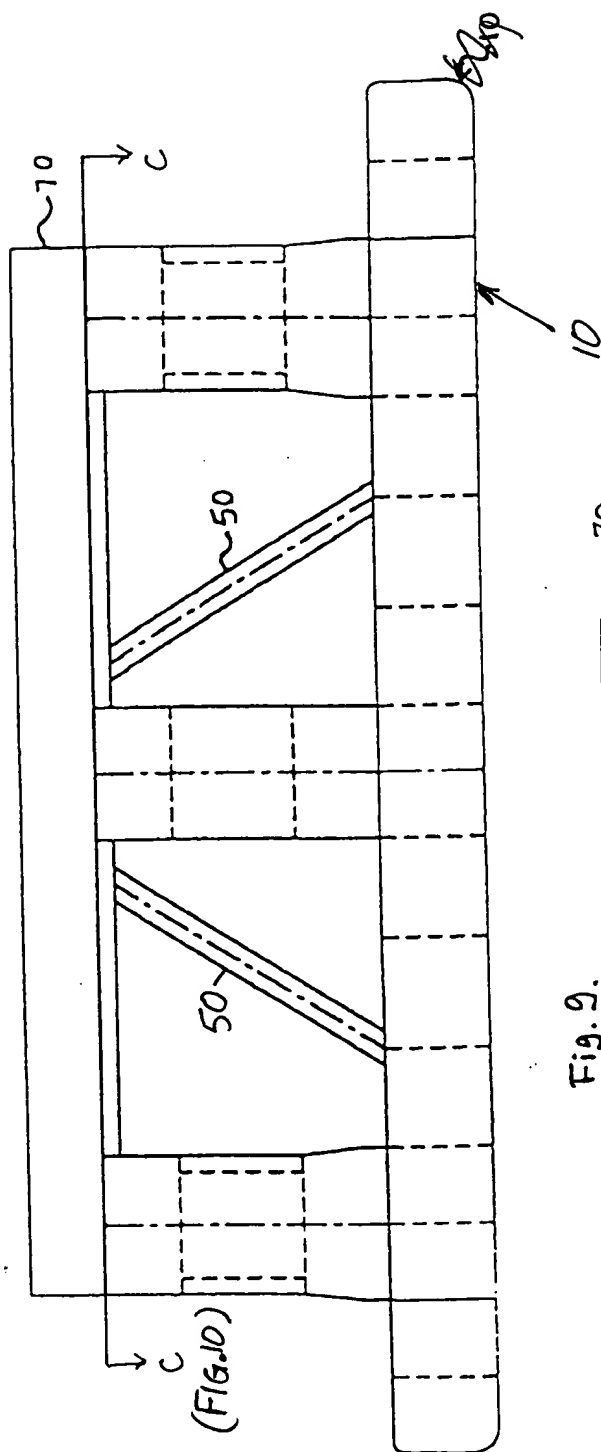
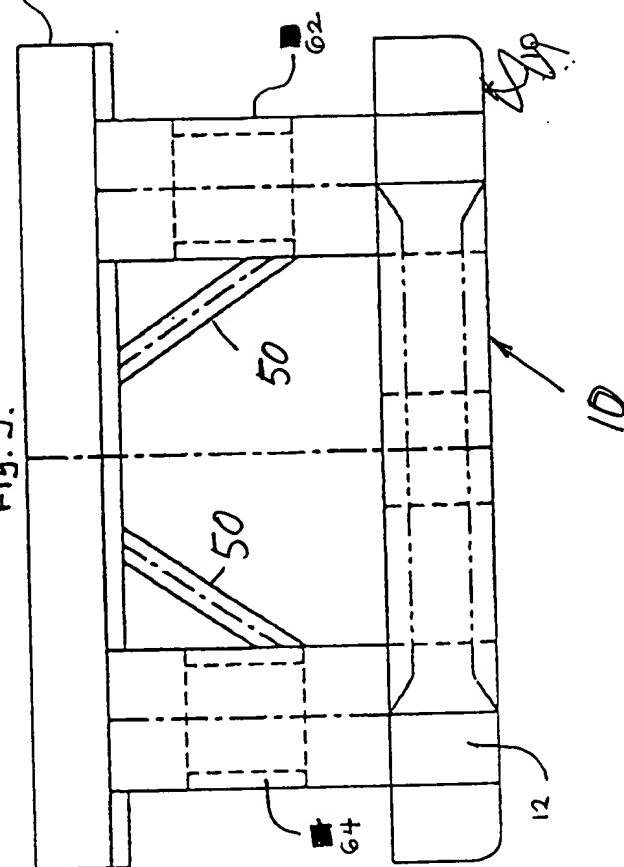


Fig. 9.



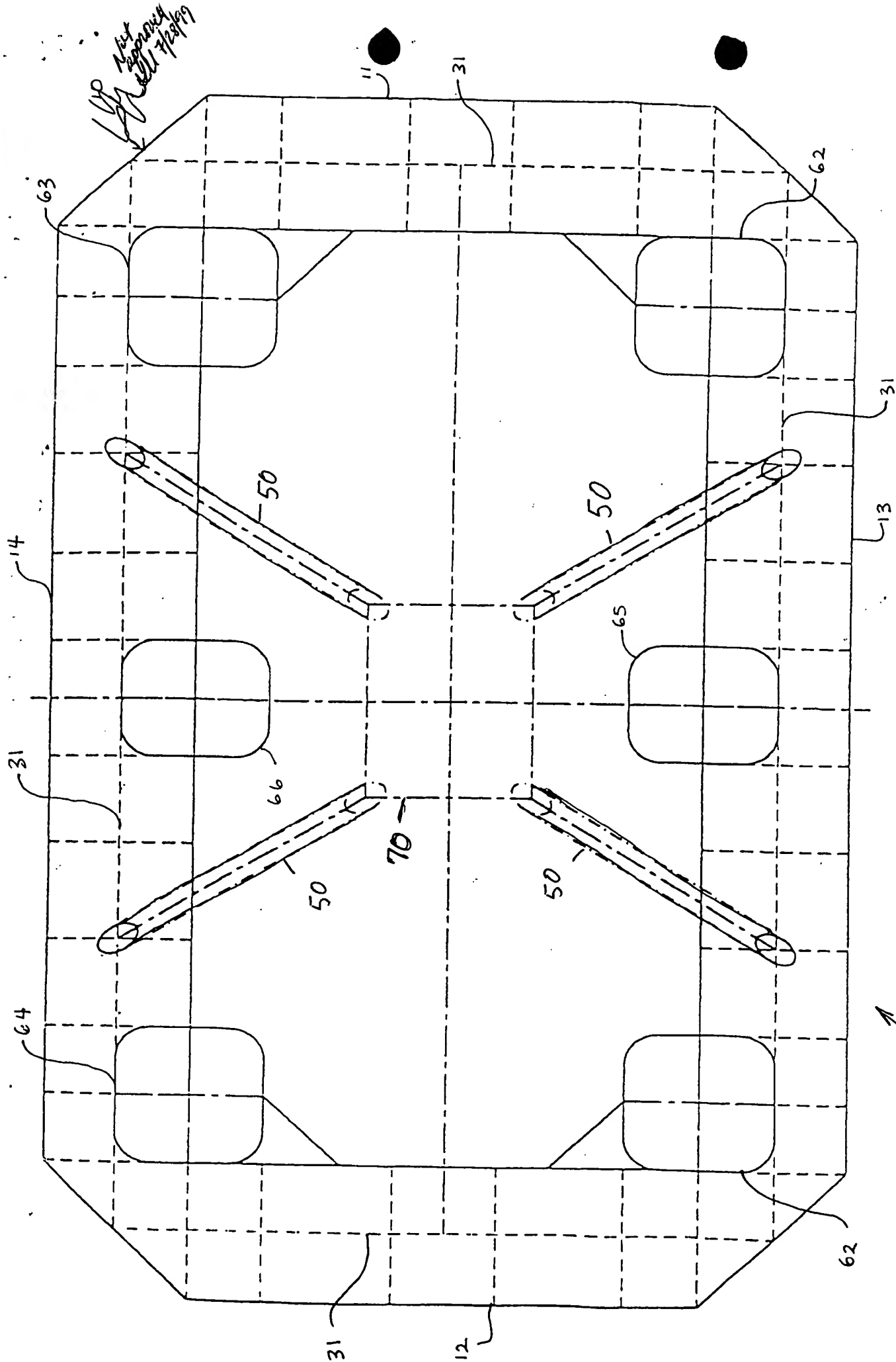


Fig. 10
(SECTION C-C ~~Fig. 8~~ AG. 8)